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Despite suburban fears of fewer buses and more city clout, a local task force led by Rep. Bill Lipinski (D-Ill.) voted Wednesday to recommend a major shakeup of the area's public transportation agencies, including giving the governor more control.

The two most controversial recommendations now being sent to Gov. Blagojevich call for folding Pace, the suburban bus agency, into Metra, and letting the governor appoint a powerful new transportation czar to run the Regional Transportation Authority, which oversees transit agencies.

The plan also calls for the restructuring of the Metra, CTA and RTA boards. Suburban officials believe the moves, if approved by the General Assembly, would centralize power in the city. They also fear suburban projects will lose funding, and that suburban bus service will be greatly reduced.

All seven members appointed by Democrats voted "yes" while the four GOP appointees voted "no."

"The recommendation, as it stands now, is sort of the 'Great Train Robbery,' " said Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), who represents the North Shore. "We now look to the suburban Democrats and Republicans to fight for their people."

The chairmen of the county boards in DuPage, Kane, Lake and McHenry also denounced the plan.

The task force vote came after several months of meetings. Lipinski touted the proposals as a way to eliminate duplicate services and boards and appoint a single person to oversee the CTA and a combined Metra-Pace, tentatively called Metra-Link.

Some Republicans see the moves as a power grab now that Democrats control the Legislature and the governor's mansion. Blagojevich has not offered an opinion, but said earlier this week

he'll be careful to ensure a "proper balance" within the agencies.

Schaumburg Mayor Al Larson, a Pace board member, said folding Pace would help ruin the balance.

State House Minority Leader Tom Cross (R-Oswego) said, "The last thing we need is anything detrimental to mass transit," adding: "Our roads are already so congested."